



This has been an extraordinary year for the state of Iowa. The disasters of the summer of 2008 have drastically reshaped the landscape of Iowa and have affected thousands of Iowans in dozens of communities. The state of Iowa already relies heavily on afterschool programs to keep kids safe, help working families, and support student learning, with much of the state still not able to meet demand. The need for quality, affordable afterschool programs will only increase as Iowans work diligently to rebuild their homes, businesses, and community resources. Additionally, afterschool programs were among many of these community resources affected by the disasters of 2008. In Cedar Rapids, alone, a dozen programs serving over 1100 children were affected by the flooding. Many of the buildings that housed these programs sustained enough damage to force the programs to move. Given that many afterschool programs operate on a limited budget, options for relocation in impacted communities are few. Those that have relocated have, in some instances, moved several miles away, which has impacted transportation issues for children and their parents.

As Iowans get back to work and rebuild the state after one of the worst disasters the state has ever experienced, reliance on afterschool programs for children will only increase. Iowa has continually ranked among the top states with both parents, or the only single parent, working outside the home. As more parents re-enter the workforce to rebuild Iowa and their lives, many Iowans will increasingly depend on afterschool programs to fill the gap between school, work – and, now – recovery schedules.

**Students who participate in afterschool programs are 75 percent more likely to be A or B students, while those that do not participate in afterschool are five times more likely to be D students.**  
– (YMCA of the USA, 2006)

**In Iowa, juvenile arrests peak at 3 pm.**

– (Iowa Department of Public Safety's Uniform Crime Reporting System)

### **Program Spotlight: St. James Kids Club, Cedar Rapids**

Like many impacted organizations and businesses, the St. James Kids Club in Cedar Rapids took steps to mitigate the impact of the 2008 flooding. The Kids Club had been through flooding before in 1993 and survived with only minor carpet damage. Sewer improvements made since the 1993 floods provided additional safeguards. In 2007, after several years of fundraising, St. James Kids Club proudly unveiled a new playground for the community, in the church's back yard. On Wednesday, June 11, about 35 kids and 20 church members started hauling valuables from the basement level location of the Club to the "safety" of the main level. Unfortunately, the flood won the battle putting over 33 inches of water on the main level. The basement was hardest hit – everything was determined to be a total loss. The church building took on approximately 22 feet of water, leaving the building paralyzed and unable to serve the community.

Much like other faith-based afterschool programs impacted by the flooding, St. James Kids Club was not able to leverage public assistance funding following the flood and is relying on private donations to recover. The Kids Club was able to relocate to St. Mark's Church located more than ten miles from St. James. Program leaders note that the new space is adequate but not conducive for a fully functioning afterschool center. The kitchen presents some challenges fixing breakfasts and lunches due to improper appliances. Additionally, the new location at St. Mark's does not provide an outdoor space for the program participants.



# Afterschool as a Vital Community Resource

Afterschool programs pride themselves on being a resource within our communities. Afterschool programs are valuable resources for all Iowans, but especially low and middle income Iowans as they strive to provide for their families. At St. James in Cedar Rapids, over 50% of program participants qualify for free or reduced priced meals. As Iowa rebuilds from historic disasters, it is important that Iowa's children and youth are provided the resources they need to succeed – and afterschool programs are the best educational opportunity to do so outside of the traditional school day. Legislative investments have generated almost \$3 million per year in requested funding. It should be noted that those who requested funding in the last grant cycle were only allowed a maximum request of \$50,000 per site. Now is the most important time to continue Iowa's commitment to family and vital communities through continued investment in our most precious resource: our kids.

## Program Spotlight: Camp Fire USA Supports Local Disaster Recovery and Preparedness

Afterschool programs are directly involved in disaster response and recovery efforts under way across the state. Below is an example of an afterschool program undertaking projects to rebuild and prepare the state for a brighter, better future.

In response to the summer's natural disasters, the Heart of the Hawkeye Council of Camp Fire USA, with a service area covering nearly two-thirds of the state, has received a Learn and Serve America grant to provide peer emergency preparedness training. Central Iowa middle-school students developed their own projects, with most focused on training for natural disaster emergency preparedness, including tornadoes and flooding. The projects will begin in summer of 2009 with the students providing training to their peers during out-of-school time. For more information, please contact Julie Cackler, Senior Program Director at Heart of the Hawkeye Council, Camp Fire USA, at [julie@campfireusaia.com](mailto:julie@campfireusaia.com).

## What is Afterschool?

Afterschool programs provide experiences that are meaningful and beneficial to children, youth, families, and communities by offering safe, engaging, and enriching environments for children and youth when they are not in school. Quality afterschool programs utilize a youth development philosophy that incorporates the strengths and assets of youth to build their skills and broaden their experiences.

Afterschool programs not only assist youth with academic issues, but help them develop career paths and volunteer opportunities, build social skills, and become civically engaged, as well as providing preventive, gender-specific, and other specialized programming. These ongoing, continuous programs occur before school, after school, in the evenings, weekends, school and other breaks, school in-service days, or for late starts or early dismissals. They can be offered by a school, by a contractor with a school, by a community-based organization, or other partnerships at a school or other location. These programs might also be referred to as "extended learning opportunities," "out-of-school" programs, or "enrichment" programs.

## About the Iowa Afterschool Alliance

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) is a statewide afterschool network, operating into its sixth year with primary support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and with additional support from a variety of state agencies and non-profits. The IAA counts more than 700 individuals and organizations in its membership, including afterschool programs and afterschool champions and advocates. The IAA is staffed by State Public Policy Group, Inc., and the Chrysalis Foundation serves as fiscal agent.

To continually strive for access to high quality afterschool programming for all Iowa children and youth, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance recognizes the following long-term priorities for afterschool in Iowa:

1. The creation of a single, sustainable source of funding for afterschool programs in Iowa to meet known demand for funding to provide programming to children and youth around the state.
2. The creation of a formal state-level Council to study afterschool demand and possible solutions.
3. Considering the importance of afterschool programming in the overall educational success of Iowa's students, especially in those communities facing challenges through poverty, high crime rates, and those recovering from disasters.